RAILROADS IN FRANCE.

Only Two Lines in the Gallic Republic Pay Legitimate Profit.

PENSIONS FOR THE MEN

French Railways Helped by the Government.

French Railroad Men Receive Less Wages Than Those in America—The Organization Known as La Fraternelle—Courtesy of French Railroad Officers.

BY CY WARMAN.

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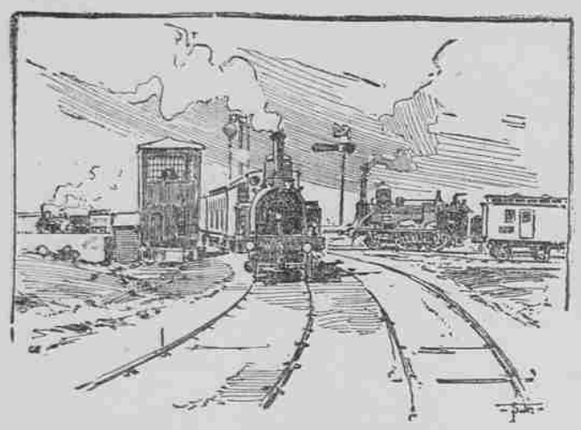
"Chemin de Fer du Nord" is the name of the railway that runs from Paris down to the English channel. Near the coast the road forks. One leg of the "Y" going to Calais, connects with the boats of the London, Chatham & Dover railway, the other touching at Bologne, interchanges traffic with the London & Southeastern. Thus, feeding from both sides, as it were, like a steam thresher, the "Iron road of the North" gets about all the business coming into France from England. This property is controlled by the Rothchilds, is well managed and is the only railway in France that pays more than operating expenses in a legitimate way. There is another road pointing out toward the Pyrenees that pays but not as the Nord pays.

Because a sick and suffering child, miserable in mind and body, had a vision of the Virgin Mary in a grotto at Lourdes they built a chapel there, and hundreds of people went there to worship. The sleepy old town grew like a mining camp, and in time another child, with a bandage on her foot, dipped her wounded member in the spring at the grotto, removed the rag and found the sore had healed. Thus another miracle was recorded. Three years ago Zola went with the regular annual pilgrimage, and wrote a book, but instead of discouraging the faithful or reducing the number of visitors the story Zola told seems to have had the opposite effect, for last year thousands of sufferers and Chauncey Depew went to Lourdes, and that's why the Southern railwa pays a dividend, now, which it failed to do before little Bernadette related her dream.

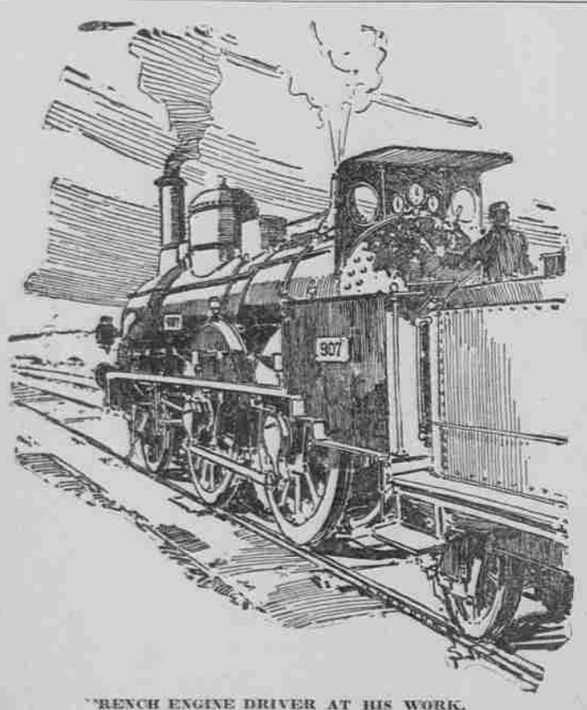
FRENCH RAILWAYS HELPED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

The railways of France are not owned and operated by the government as they are in Germany nor by stockholders as they are in England, but by both. When you buy a railway ticket in France 12 per cent. of what you pay for that ticket goes directly to the government. For this the state guarantees a reasonable interest on the money invested in building and equipping the road. At the end of the year if the road has run behind and failed to earn expenses (and they invariably do fail with the exceptions already noted) the stockholders do not apply for a receiver; the government simply steps in, makes good the shortage and the same officials continue to do business at the old stand. One would naturally suppose that, being thus secure in their places, the officials would become arrogant, icy and unapproachable, but they are the most obliging, genial railway officials on earth. The secretary, whose office corresponds with our general manager's, I remember, of two of the biggest and best roads in France, stood up and bowed to me when I entered, and then sat down and chatted as pleasantly as though I had been an ambassador. They are deeply interested in all that is going on in the American railway world, and men are kept to translate whatever is written by Americans of the railways over here.

If, by any streak of good luck, such as has come to the line to Lourdes, a railway begins to earn more than operating expenses and interest on the money invested, the surplus goes to the state to make good what has been



THE JUNCTION AT THE "Y."



FRENCH ENGINE DRIVER AT HIS WORK.

advanced to the railway company.

In return for all it guarantees to the railways the government reserves the right, in case of war, to take possession of all the railways, rolling stock and officials, at a moment's notice. With a touch of the key the president of France can make a colonel of the superintendent, a captain of the chief de gare, and soldiers of the section men.

As the officials are interested in the management of American railways, so are the employees interested in the struggles and tribulations of the railway employees in the United States. They read closely and discuss hotly all that goes on over here, and during the Pullman strike at Chicago that was one of the matters regularly discussed at the meetings of La Fraternelle.

This organization is the oldest and strongest in the republic, having a fund of 15,000,000 francs. A rival organization has been formed lately but it is more of a political order and does not amount to much. La Fraternelle is an organization somewhat similar to the American Railway Union, admitting to membership all classes of railway employees and including among its numbers many prominent officials. They have very few strikes among the employees in France—the men appear to be very well satisfied, and to feel secure in their places. This is due mainly to the kindness of the officials. Engine men are especially optimistic at all times, since it is the rule in France to choose all officials of the locomotive department from among the men, so there is the eternal spring of hope to encourage them.

HOW FRENCH RAILROAD MEN ARE PAID.

The system employed by the French in making up the pay roll is hard to understand. First there is a fixed salary for train and enginemen, and what one receives above that amount depends upon the mileage made and upon the time it has taken to make that mileage. In addition to all this there is a small premium on economy in oil and fuel and upon the care of the locomotive, rolling stock or other property in the employees' care. The pay of an engine driver runs from $65 to $85 a month. Firemen earn from $45 to $50 a month. Conductors get from $30 to $50 a month.

It would be hard for railway employees here to understand how a man can be perfectly contented to fire a locomotive four or five years for $40 and $50, or how an enginedriver can be perfectly happy at $85 a month, standing on a seatless, cabless engine through the long bitter cold winter night—and northern France is as cold as northern New York. French employees do not require as much in the way of comforts of life as Americans do. Your Frenchman with four sous worth of bread and cheese and five sous worth of sour wine will make a meal. His three meals a day will not cost him more than 39 cents, while an American in a similar capacity pays 35 cents a meal. Being accustomed to the cold the Frenchman sleeps in a fireless room and looks for nothing better. In short, with half the wages and none of the comforts he manages to be about twice as happy as the average railway employee in America.

Except in cases of gross carelessness or drunkenness on duty an employee is seldom discharged unless the charges made against him are well sustained after thorough investigation during which he is allowed ample opportunity to defend his cause. The management, as a rule, does not consider the organization of employees as detrimental to the service. On the contrary, such organization is rather encouraged than otherwise so long as the object is mutual aid, but they fight hard against the formation of anything of a political nature.

MANY PORTERS TO DO LITTLE WORK.

One is surprised at the army of idle porters, who do the work of office boys, but they are all big grown up men and it takes at least a half dozen of them to do the work usually done by a bright boy in this country. Even at the entrance to the shops or yards you will find a closed gate, a little office or bureau, as they call it, and a half dozen men, half police and half porters, in charge of this gate. Just outside the office of the director of one of the large railways I saw eight big, round faced, clip-headed porters seated at a long table waiting to take in the card of any visitor who might call. One of them took my card and passed it up to the man who appeared to be the chief. That individual shot a few sharp glances at me and directed one of the men to "throw me in" on a siding while he submitted my card to a number of under clerks. Presently a young man came out and said in an embarrassed way that he was afraid zat ze secretary could not see me.

"Give this to him," said I, "and let him decide the matter," and I handed the clerk a letter from the United States embassy. In less than two minutes I was in the presence of the director who stood up to receive me. It's the same everywhere. My embarrassment always ends when I get past the typewriter and the office boy.

RAILROAD MEN ARE PENSIONED IN FRANCE.

One of the most interesting features in the management of the railways in France is the system of retiring pensions in vogue on some of the large railways. All "commissioned employees" as they are called, which includes all staff officers, men employed in the transportation and locomotive departments and on permanent way, are entitled to a retiring pension when they reach the age of fifty-five years or have served the company a quarter of a century. The amount of the pension depends upon the average pay drawn by the employee, but is never less than 600 nor more than 900 francs a year. If an employee is compelled by any misfortune to leave the service, or is "forced to retire" after having served fifteen or twenty years, he receives a retiring pension; but in that case it is never more than 450 nor less than 300 francs.

A widow is entitled to one-half the pension of her husband provided the marriage took place two years previous to the husband's death. This seems a hard rule, but it is necessary, I am told, to guard against enterprising young widows who are wont to spring up unexpectedly and come weeping around the grave of a dead pensioner. Sometimes the woman came alone, sometimes leading a little child whom the relatives of the dead man had never seen. You can kick a brush-heap and get a widow anywhere in France.

To provide for this retiring pension fund 3 per cent. of the wages of each employee is retained to which the company adds an amount equal to 12 per cent. of the wages. In other words, four-fifths of the fund is contributed by the company. A very important rule to the employees, is one providing that in case a servant severs his connection with the road, even if he is dismissed by the company before he has served long enough to be entitled to a pension, all the money he has contributed to the pension fund is returned to him with interest. Day laborers who do not contribute to the pension fund have no share, of course, in the benefits of that fund, but they are not forgotten by the company. If they have served fifteen years they receive a retiring pension equal to one-half the amount received by commissioned employees. This fund is provided almost entirely by the railway company.

Those who have served but a short time, if overtaken by any serious trouble are usually cared for in the same way by the management, and all this tends to make the employees appreciate what they have and strive to hold their places or gain better places with better wages. Very friendly are the relations of the railways to the press and the press to the railways. Passes are given more freely, if anything, to reputable journalists than they are in America. A great many political men, including ex-members of parliament are considered to be entitled to permanent passes. Two varieties of the French politician invariably refuse free transportation, the man who is extremely conscientious and afraid of his job, and the fellow who is only acting to fool the people. These good souls either pay fare or walk.

POOR, INDEED,

There are degrees and kinds of poverty, just as there are differences of opinion among those who compute and measure poverty and riches by different standards. Some men deem themselves poor because they are less rich than others; again there are comparatively poor people who are satisfied with a competence. There is a kind of poverty for which no amount of wealth can compensate, namely; a poverty of bodily stamina, evinced by nervousness and a derangement of the functions of digestion, billous secretion and the bowels. To restore vigor upon a permanent basis there is one remedy that fully covers the requirements, "fills the bill," and this is Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. By restoring digestion, giving a healthful impulse to the action of the bowels and liver and tranquilizing the nerves, it fulfills the condition necessary to a resumption of strength by the system. It also overcomes malaria and rheumatism.

FUNCTION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION.

How far should the state educate? Simply to the point necessary for its preservation. The underlying principle of state education is state preservation. The moment we leave the principle of necessity, we are on uncertain and debatable ground. It does not require much discussion to determine the simple and fundamental branches of education that the state should teach in order to protect itself against gross ignorance and inefficiency. Reading, writing, figuring and a knowledge of the country's history should be most thoroughly taught. To this could be combined an education of the hand as well as of the head, the first rudiments of training having been started in the kindergarten. All appliances for teaching these fundamentals of education should be most modern and complete and carried on under the best hygienic surroundings. The absence of any attempt to cope with the higher and more ornamental branches would leave sufficient time and money to lay a proper groundwork in every child's case, even the most backward and unpromising one. The importance of primary education is now universally recognized, as it is, directly or indirectly, made compulsory in all civilized countries. When, however, the state attempts to carry education along higher lines, the temptation to neglect the humble primary branches in the interest of the upper and more showy grades becomes apparently impossible to resist.

This tendency is nowhere more glaringly exhibited than in New York, where public education is poor and incomplete in the primary and fundamental parts but elaborate in the higher and non-essential grades. We have two well-equipped colleges, with many courses, and numerous grammar schools on the one hand; on the other, primary schools without proper appliances for either health or education, overcrowded and unable to accommodate many of the children who apply for even this poor modicum of instruction. The great majority of children of New York who are educated at the city's expense never get beyond the primary grades, as they have to begin to earn their living at from 12 to 14 years of age. A conservative estimate places the number of children who cannot be accommodated for want of room at the public schools at 50,000, the great majority of whom are candidates for the primary grades. Poor as it is, the fundamentals of education are thus denied to a large number of children who need such training. Many of these children are of foreign parentage and are thus in danger of growing up in ignorance of our laws and institutions, unless the state educates them, as a measure for its own protection.—North American Review.

It is often a mystery how a cold has been "caught." The fact is, however, that when the blood is poor and the system depressed, one becomes peculiarly liable to diseases. When the appetite or the strength fails, Ayer's Sarsaparilla should be taken without delay.

A VICTIM OF THE STORM.

Written for the Sunday Herald.

BY WATKIN L. ROE.

As if recovering from a dream of idleness
The Storm King burst in frenzied madness;
And woke a city from its quietude
To one of viciousness and fury.

It had been snowing for days, and in spite of the prognostications of the weather prophets, it continued unabated.

The day had been long and weary. The blizzard which had been blowing continued to increase with renewed fury, and it was at its worst at the time I arrived at the thickly populated town of D, on the 25th day of January.

The snow was two feet deep in some places, and the cutting north wind, which had taken the place of the northwesterly one of the day, was one of the worst that had been encountered in that part of the country.

Traffic had long ceased to brave the wild and blinding tendencies of the storm. The cars, too, had quit running, and save for a straggling wayfarer, all was quiet. True, the electric lights were still burning and sending o'er the frozen white surface of the ground a pale gleam, as if struggling for mastery in an attempt to keep up its radiance through the night.

Here and there could be seen some store or saloon brightly lighted, as if they were still doing business; but aside from this, it was too wild a night for anyone to be around braving the freezing blast of the north.

One could not help but picture the thorny path that some portions of suffering humanity have to travel through this toiling life in their almost superhuman struggle against the inroads of poverty; how adversity has made them indifferent; that in the midst of their despair they could see no fond finger of hope beckoning them on to a brighter and more lucrative goal. But such is the inconsistency of human nature. Troubles and trials increase, and lower and lower steps humanity in its fit of despondency. Life is a burden, and the gaunt and bony hand of death is outstretched with a mocking smile at one more victim that will soon be added to the uncounted millions. For one to ruminate upon past life and think what might have been if he had taken the opportunity when it was offered causes regret. The poet looked into the inmost soul when he exclaimed:

"There is a tide in the affairs of man which, when taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

But every one is not blessed with the gift of discernment of the construction of the future. His vision is but that of mortality, and without divine aid he is as but clay within the hands of the moulder. His eyes look only to that "ever living present;" the morrow is not thought of; the future is dull and void, and under the this influence he goes on the even tenor of his way uninterested in the events that are transpiring around him, to the grave of the unmourned.

And on such a night as this how many of these poor creatures could be found in every nook and out-of-the-way corner of the world—tossed and buffeted by the inhumanity of man into all manner of vices, until the highway of destruction is reached, and then—oblivion.

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In the distance could be seen a struggling form gradually going towards one of the lighted windows. A thin shawl was tightly wrapped around the poor wasted figure in an attempt to keep out the blasts of the night. What could be her errand on such a night as this was more than I could comprehend. Surely, she had some place of shelter, somewhere to go out of the terrors of the storm.

Perhaps she was one of those unfortunate creature who had been ruined by the wickedness of man. Slowly, but bravely, she moved forward, until she reached the door of the gaudily lighted saloon, and then paused, half fearful about proceeding further. Pushing the door gently open, she peered inside. Ribald singing could be plainly heard, and the clinking of glasses told the nature of the place. Rude and lascivious talk was rife, and it re-echoed with a resonant sound through the quiet street. I was interested. Something impelled me to stay and investigate. The poor woman still waited by the door, which had been gradually opened. I could see that she was beckoning to someone inside. Presently a man came tottering out in a state of intoxication. He looked strong beside the poor shivering human frame near him. Shuffling toward her, he said:

"Well, what do yer want?"

"Oh, Ted, come home with me. Baby is sick, and I fear—fear—that it will not live unless we get some aid."

"Ugh! get out! Another o' yer d—d slick ways o' getting me home. Eh! what do yer take me for? Do yer think I'm a d—d fool. Don't yer think I don't know yer?"

"And why should you not be at home? Here you are spending your money when baby and I are starving!" and the poor creature sobbed in her grief.

"Well, I tell yer I ain't a-going home, see? So get off. I'll come when I get ready. Baby's sick, eh?" he sneered.

"Have you no pity? Is there a spark of humanity in your soul? My God! can't you see that I'm speaking the truth? Do you think that I would lie at such a time as this? Oh, Ted," she entreated, the tears flowing down her cheeks like rain, "by the love I bear you, and that of your dear child, who is now on a bed of sickness, I conjure you—nay, I implore you to come home. Be a man for once. Let your better nature come to the fore and shake off these companions and these surroundings, and be as you once were, a good and faithful husband."

"I tell you I will not listen to you. Don't you think I want some companionship besides home ties? Bah! If I talk any longer to you I will become as weak as a woman," and, staggering toward the door, he dashed inside.

Under the pale glitter of the electric light the poor woman bowed her head as if in prayer.

The blow of the inhuman husband—crazed with drink—had struck home with unerring precision.

A dagger thrust could not have been more complete in its suddenness.

Her face depicted the agony of her soul.

Her poor, starving babeling in want, with the fingers of some demon of disease clutching at its very life; her husband indifferent to her entreaties, with a drunken, leering rebuff, fills to the brim her cup of agony. Oh, God! in thy magnitude and power, canst thou not strike such brutes to the earth? Why let these poor suffering women be the target for such monsters in human shape?

I was sickened to the heart and could hardly restrain myself at what I had witnessed.

The inhumanity of man
Has led to wretchedness and misery;
And ofth hath caused the gentler sex
To find an early grave.

Crossing the street, I went up to the poor creature and asked her to accept the help which I could give, feeling considerably embarrassed as I approached, fearful of her refusal. At first, she made a motion to refuse the proffered help; but, as if a vision had speedily risen before her of her sickly babe, she moved forward and clutched the money which I had offered; her eyes being blinded with tears as she looked up at me with a thankful expression, but no words could be formed upon those frozen lips—so great was her grief.

I hastily turned away, feeling thankful that I had been able to do something which had given me satisfaction. I entered the hotel near by and seeking my room was soon lost in slumber.

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I was late next morning when I awoke. The dim and cloud-thickened sky had been transformed to one of brightness. The sun shone in its resplendent glory. The jingle! jingle! of the sleigh bells spoke of the enjoyment of some as a result of the storm of the day previous. I could not help contrasting the two scenes—one a picture of gloom, poverty and misery; the other one of brightness with a sky without the semblance of a cloud to dim its clear and even surface.

I wondered if the poor woman with whom I had made the acquaintance so inauspiciously the night previous had received satisfaction from the little help it had been my fortunate lot to extend.

Perhaps I should never have the chance to see her again—to ascertain whether she had been the recipient of the "cloud with the silver lining."

Perhaps it would be the turning point of her life.

Maybe, the means which would rescue her husband from the gulf of vice in which he had unfortunately placed himself.

That their home might take on a new air of prosperity, and want and squalor be relegated to the past. Ah! if all this could only be true, then I would, indeed, have some satisfaction for very little expenditure.

I continued brooding on the subject, when my breakfast was brought in, together with the necessary adjunct—the daily newspaper. Dismissing everything of that nature from my mind, I soon fell to a contemplation of the viands before me. Perusing the paper, as one is wont to do on such occasions, I was soon interested.

First I scanned the headlines to see if there was anything of importance, then proceeded to read the telegraphic news, reserving the local till the last. There was the usual number of casualties and other events which tended to make an interesting telegraphic page. But by the time I had finished reading that portion of the paper I laid it aside deciding to go for a stroll. Hastily putting on my coat and hat, I was journeying toward the door, when I accidentally caught sight of a headline on the local page which I must have missed, which impelled me to again take up the paper and read the nature of it. It ran thus:

A VICTIM OF THE STORM.

With a Snow Bank for a Bed, She Sank to Sleep.

FROZEN TO THE GROUND.

Lulled Into the Great Beyond by the Silent Reaper, She Beckons to Her Babe from the Other Shore—Her Hands Clasping a $5 Gold Piece—Her Husband in Jail.

Early this morning Officers Murphy and Listoff stumbled across the frozen form of a woman on Murden street. Her face indicated that she had but recently passed through great agony. Her clothes were worn threadbare by the process of time. It could be seen that she was a woman who had seen better times; that, like many others, adversity had overtaken her, and had reduced her to the state in which the officers had found her.

Upon inquiry, it was found that her name was Lillie Edmond, and that she was the daughter of a prominent merchant in an adjoining state. That like one of the eccentricities of this life, she had married Ted Edmond, a most promising young man, and their life seemed to be blessed with happiness and contentment. But by some unlucky venture, he had lost all his property and business interests, and step by step he had sunk down to the lowest depths of drunkenness. Their home has been broken up and what was left was wretched to behold.

At their place of abode a sad state of affairs was seen. The door being locked, the officers forced an entrance, and upon searching the house the six-months-old babe of the poor woman was found in the cold embrace of death—lulled to sleep, as it were, by the mother who had previously journeyed to the other side of the stream.

What tended to end one of the most serious of complications was the fact that the woman's husband had been taken to the station house early this morning by the officers, who had found him lying on the sidewalk in a state of intoxication.

This is really one of the worst cases we have had to chronicle in the whole of our journalistic career.

Thus two souls had left this sphere of action through the inhuman tendencies of man. Looking on these cold forms I asked the question: "Oh, grave where is thy victory? Oh, death, where is thy sting,"

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I afterwards learned that when Ted Edmond came to a realization of the facts, in his fit of agony he cried out with frenzied madness:

"Oh, God! kill me! I am the cause of this!" and fell prone to the floor.

It was months before he regained consciousness. The doctors had given him up more than once. It had been a severe atttack of brain fever. Retribution had to be made, and this was the only way to fill his cup of remorse to the brim.

On Sundays he could generally be seen wending his way to the cemetery on the hill—the flowers in his hand to be strewn on the graves of his wife and child—more dear since they had journeyed to the great beyond.

But what a change in the man!

His form was bent, his face haggard—the dagger of remorse was quietly piercing his soul.

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A few years afterwards I again visited the city. I inquired for Ted Edmond; in answer to the query, a finger was pointed in silence to the cemetery on the hill.

WASTED ENERGY AND EXPENSE.

A new advertising wagon introduced in New York is fitted up with two cylinders which keep revolving, giving a momentary view of various business announcements. There are people who would rather spend $10 to catch the eye of two or three thousand people with a contraption of this kind than invest 50 cents to reach a hundred thousand readers in a good newspaper.

INHUMAN.

Miss Thirtysmith (wrathfully)—That Jack Gayboy is too mean to live.

Dolly Swift—What offense has he been guilty of?

Miss Thirtysmith—He proposed to me last night, and when I blushed and stammered that it was so sudden, the wretch burst into a roar of laughter, and I was obliged to haughtily reject his proposal to save my self-respect.—Harper's Bazar.

FAMILY PRIDE.

Brown—My son John has graduated with honor at the university.

Robinson—Well, you needn't brag. My mules carry off the blue ribbon every year at our fair.—Texas Siftings.